

Dear FCC Commissioners,

I will try to keep this brief, but please be aware that I am one of the over 137,000 US citizens who is outraged by the current media monopoly that exists in America. I also commend FCC Commissioners Jonathan Adelstein and Michael Copps for their untiring commitment toward encouraging public discourse surrounding FCC media deregulation despite the lack of encouragement from the commission.

To say that public outrage doesn't matter because decisions shouldn't be made by popular vote (an argument that is likely supported by those media giant representatives in support of ruling in favor of increased media consolidation) is to say that the FCC is no longer responsible for serving the public interest. With respect to the overwhelming public "veto" of altering media consolidation rules (i.e., media deregulation), it is unmistakably clear that the FCC will dissent from the majority public interest should the commission vote in favor of softening deregulation rules on June 2nd, rules that were put in place to prevent major media globalization such as what is occurring and will only worsen should the vote for further deregulation be made.

Until recently, it seemed as if the FCC was working on the side of major media companies by trying to keep a low profile on the issue currently being debated. Now that the proverbial cat is out of the bag, the FCC AT THE VERY LEAST should defer the June 2nd vote to a later time, after which time the FCC has had a chance to allow openly democratic public discourse on this issue.

I as well as Americans throughout the United States take this matter -- the media that we watch, listen to, and read every day -- very personally. It is not enough to hear news that is obviously pre-packaged for soft public consumption that is in line with the political and economic views and goals of a few (those in control of the majority of media outlets in this country), and therefore serving their own self-interests. What America needs is for the FCC to review plans to establish policy that holds accountable the media conglomerates that control the majority of publicly-owned broadcast outlets designed to serve the public interest today.

I will quote a portion of the speech "Big Macs and Big Media: The Decision to Supersize" given by Commissioner Adelstein at the Media Institute this past May 20th:

"We're already hearing a growing refrain for media reform from people upset by the content of today's programming -- by the rampant bad taste, sensationalism, sex, violence, and lack of positive family programming on TV; by the explicit language and homogenization on the radio dial; by the stories not covered in the news media, particularly when the media's corporate self-interests are at stake... People all over, not just in Minot, North Dakota, have drawn a direct link between consolidation, with its absentee ownership, and the failure to meet the needs of local communities."

It goes without saying, then, that loosening the restraints on media ownership rules will only continue to serve the selfish ends of today's controlling mass media companies, and open the door to

further consolidation by those same entities. I plead with the commission to fully evaluate their stance on media deregulation rules and give the public interest a fair chance by slowing down the train of disaster which is fast approaching the station should the commission vote in favor of further deregulation on such rules governing media consolidation.

The letter below is one that I and many others sent to Senator John McCain recently. It reads:

The Federal Communications Commission is on the verge of passing sweeping new rules that would dramatically alter the media landscape in the United States. The proposal would gut long-standing rules to slow and limit the growth of media monopolies and would allow media conglomerates to own all of the major media outlets in one city, including a dominant newspaper, television station, radio station and cable outlet. The FCC is the federal agency that is charged with regulating the public airwaves on behalf of the American public. Yet, FCC Chairman Michael Powell is pushing ahead with a June 2 vote without any public comment. The FCC proposal had been kept secret until two commission members forced the proposal into the open. The public deserves that such far-reaching changes to the rules governing media ownership be publicly discussed and debated. Last time similar rules were changed over 1,000 radio stations changed hands, local news and music play lists were decimated, and two companies, Clear Channel and CBS radio, came to own nearly half of the radio stations in the entire country. I urge you to speak out and to call on FCC Chairman Powell to postpone or cancel the scheduled June 2 vote until there can be a significant public discussion and debate on the sweeping changes being proposed to media ownership rules. Please let me know how you intend to proceed on this issue.

The issue is in the public sight. The view expressed above is not just mine but is apparently the view of a vast number of Americans as evidenced by the bombardment of similar material to Senator McCain and likely to many of you who reside on the commission. Thank you for your attention to this important issue and your commitment to effectively engaging the public interest that the commission was so greatly designed to serve.

Sincerely,

Tracey Lewis
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